

Express Mail No. EV241978984US

PATENT APPLICATION OF
James K. Klang
ENTITLED
APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PREDICTING THE
REMAINING DISCHARGE TIME OF A BATTERY.

Docket No. C382.12-0143

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PREDICTING THE REMAINING DISCHARGE TIME OF A BATTERY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is based on and
5 claims the benefit of U.S. provisional patent
application Serial No. 60/437,255, filed December 31,
2002; and U.S. provisional patent application Serial
No. 60/437,611, filed January 2, 2003, the contents of
which are hereby incorporated by reference in their
10 entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to storage
batteries. More specifically, the present invention
relates to predicting a remaining discharge time of a
15 battery.

Automotive vehicles powered by combustion
engines typically include a rechargeable battery.
When the vehicle is running, an alternator attached
to the engine is used to charge the battery.
20 Additionally, the alternator is used to power
electrical components of the vehicle when the engine
is running. However, the battery is the only source
of power to continue to maintain the lights or other
devices in operation when the vehicle ignition has
25 been turned off. Further, the battery is used to
provide cranking power to start the vehicle.

In typical prior art automotive vehicle
charging systems, a voltage regulator is used to set a
voltage, generated by the alternator, which is applied

to the battery when the engine is running. In addition to such charging systems, some vehicles include systems that are capable of determining battery charge level, battery voltage, etc., and providing such information to the vehicle user. However, these prior art systems do not provide any information regarding the remaining run time of the battery, which can be useful in many applications. For example, there is a need in the trucking industry to monitor residual capacity of the battery while the truck is parked and appliances powered by the battery are used while the driver is resting. Under such conditions the battery can completely discharge, leaving the truck without power and incapable of starting.

15 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

 A method and apparatus for predicting the remaining discharge time of a battery are provided. The method includes measuring a dynamic parameter of the battery, obtaining a discharge current of the battery, measuring a voltage of the battery and obtaining a temperature of the battery. The remaining run time of the battery is predicted as a function of the measured battery dynamic parameter, the discharge current, the measured battery voltage, the battery temperature, a full charge battery dynamic parameter and an estimated capacity of the battery.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a simplified block diagram showing a system for monitoring a battery in a vehicle in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

5 FIG. 2 is a simplified block diagram showing the steps of a method of predicting the remaining run time of a discharging battery in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 3-1 to 3-9 are flowcharts of a
10 specific embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a simplified block diagram of a battery tester in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

15 The present invention offers an apparatus and method for predicting a remaining discharge time of a battery under a variety of conditions. Such a method and apparatus can be part of a general energy management system for a vehicle.

20 FIG. 1 is a simplified block diagram showing an automotive vehicle 10 which includes a battery monitor 12, capable of predicting the remaining discharge time (or remaining run time) of a battery, in accordance with one embodiment of the present
25 invention. Vehicle 10 includes vehicle loads 14 which are shown schematically as an electrical resistance. A battery 18 is coupled to the vehicle load 14 and to an alternator 20. Alternator 20 couples to an engine of

the vehicle 10 and is used to charge battery 18 and provide power to loads 14 during operation.

In preferred embodiments, battery monitor 12 operates, with exceptions and additions as discussed below, in accordance with methods described in U.S. Patent No. 6,331,762, issued December 18, 2001, entitled ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE, which is incorporated herein in its entirety. Battery monitor 12 operates in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention and measures voltage, a dynamic parameter such as conductance (G), current and temperature of battery 18. These measurements may be periodically carried out and stored in a memory, which can be within monitor 12. Using this stored data, circuitry 12 predicts a remaining run time of discharging battery 18 under a variety of conditions.

As can be seen in FIG. 1, circuitry 12 includes a processing circuitry or microprocessor 22 coupled to a voltage sensor 24, a current sensor 26, a forcing function 28 and a temperature sensor 37. Microprocessor 22 may also include one or more inputs and outputs illustrated as I/O 30 adapted to couple to an external databus or to an internal databus associated with the vehicle 10. Further, a user input/output (I/O) 32 is included for providing interaction with a vehicle operator.

The battery monitor 12 is easily installed in a vehicle electrical system. A single shunt current

sensor 26 must be inserted in one of the primary battery cables and, in some embodiments, a control line is provided to allow control of alternator 20. The control can be by simply adjusting the voltage supplied to a voltage regulator of alternator 20 to thereby control charging of battery 18. The battery monitor 12 can be a separate, self-sufficient and self-contained monitor which operates without requiring interaction with other components of the vehicle except, in some embodiments, alternator 20.

In embodiments of the present invention, microprocessor 22 determines battery conductance in response to inputs, alone or in various functional combinations, from current sensor 26, voltage sensor 24, forcing function 28 and temperature sensor 37. Microprocessor 22 utilizes the measured battery conductance along with the full charge conductance adjusted to the same temperature standard as the measured battery conductance, the estimated capacity of the battery, etc., to determine the remaining run time of the battery. The determination of the remaining run time of the battery is described in detail further below.

FIG. 1 also illustrates a Kelvin connection formed by connections 36A and 36B to battery 18. With such a Kelvin connection, two couplings are provided to the positive and negative terminals of battery 18. This allows one of the electrical connections on each side of the battery to carry large amounts of current

while the other pair of connections can be used to obtain accurate voltage readings. Because substantially no current is flowing through the voltage sensor 24, there will be little voltage drop through the electrical connection between sensor 24 and battery 18 thereby providing more accurate voltage measurements. In various embodiments, the forcing function 28 can be located physically proximate battery 18 or be connected directly to battery 18. In other embodiments, the forcing function 28 is located anywhere within the electrical system of vehicle 10.

In operation, microprocessor 22 is capable of measuring a dynamic parameter of battery 18. As used herein, a dynamic parameter includes any parameter of battery 18 which is measured as a function of a signal having an AC or transient component. Examples of dynamic parameters include dynamic resistance, conductance, admittance, impedance or their combinations. In various aspects of the invention, this measurement can be correlated, either alone or in combination with other measurements or inputs received by microprocessor 22, to the condition or status of battery 18. This correlation can be through testing of various batteries and may be through the use of a lookup table or a functional relationship such as a characterization curve. The relationship can also be adjusted based upon battery construction, type, size or other parameters of battery 18. Examples of various testing techniques are described in the following

references which are incorporated herein by reference
U.S. Patent No. 3,873,911, issued March 25, 1975, to
Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING DEVICE;
U.S. Patent No. 3,909,708, issued September 30, 1975,
5 to Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING
DEVICE; U.S. Patent No. 4,816,768, issued March 28,
1989, to Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING
DEVICE; U.S. Patent No. 4,825,170, issued April 25,
1989, to Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING
10 DEVICE WITH AUTOMATIC VOLTAGE SCALING; U.S. Patent No.
4,881,038, issued November 14, 1989, to Champlin,
entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING DEVICE WITH
AUTOMATIC VOLTAGE SCALING TO DETERMINE DYNAMIC
CONDUCTANCE; U.S. Patent No. 4,912,416, issued March
15 27, 1990, to Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY
TESTING DEVICE WITH STATE-OF-CHARGE COMPENSATION; U.S.
Patent No. 5,140,269, issued August 18, 1992, to
Champlin, entitled ELECTRONIC TESTER FOR ASSESSING
BATTERY/CELL CAPACITY; U.S. Patent No. 5,343,380,
20 issued August 30, 1994, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR SUPPRESSING TIME VARYING SIGNALS IN BATTERIES
UNDERGOING CHARGING OR DISCHARGING; U.S. Patent No.
5,572,136, issued November 5, 1996, entitled ELECTRONIC
BATTERY TESTER WITH AUTOMATIC COMPENSATION FOR LOW
25 STATE-OF-CHARGE; U.S. Patent No. 5,574,355, issued
November 12, 1996, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
DETECTION AND CONTROL OF THERMAL RUNAWAY IN A BATTERY
UNDER CHARGE; U.S. Patent No. 5,585,416, issued
December 10, 1996, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR

STEP-CHARGING BATTERIES TO OPTIMIZE CHARGE ACCEPTANCE;
U.S. Patent No. 5,585,728, issued December 17, 1996,
entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH AUTOMATIC
COMPENSATION FOR LOW STATE-OF-CHARGE; U.S. Patent No.
5 5,589,757, issued December 31, 1996, entitled APPARATUS
AND METHOD FOR STEP-CHARGING BATTERIES TO OPTIMIZE
CHARGE ACCEPTANCE; U.S. Patent No. 5,592,093, issued
January 7, 1997, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTING
DEVICE LOOSE TERMINAL CONNECTION DETECTION VIA A
10 COMPARISON CIRCUIT; U.S. Patent No. 5,598,098, issued
January 28, 1997, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER
WITH VERY HIGH NOISE IMMUNITY; U.S. Patent No.
5,656,920, issued August 12, 1997, entitled METHOD FOR
OPTIMIZING THE CHARGING LEAD-ACID BATTERIES AND AN
15 INTERACTIVE CHARGER; U.S. Patent No. 5,757,192, issued
May 26, 1998, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
DETECTING A BAD CELL IN A STORAGE BATTERY; U.S. Patent
No. 5,821,756, issued October 13, 1998, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH TAILORED COMPENSATION
20 FOR LOW STATE-OF-CHARGE; U.S. Patent No. 5,831,435,
issued November 3, 1998, entitled BATTERY TESTER FOR
JIS STANDARD; U.S. Patent No. 5,914,605, issued June
22, 1999, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S.
Patent No. 5,945,829, issued August 31, 1999, entitled
25 MIDPOINT BATTERY MONITORING; U.S. Patent No. 6,002,238,
issued December 14, 1999, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR MEASURING COMPLEX IMPEDANCE OF CELLS AND BATTERIES;
U.S. Patent No. 6,037,751, issued March 14, 2000,
entitled APPARATUS FOR CHARGING BATTERIES; U.S. Patent

No. 6,037,777, issued March 14, 2000, entitled METHOD
AND APPARATUS FOR DETERMINING BATTERY PROPERTIES FROM
COMPLEX IMPEDANCE/ADMITTANCE; U.S. Patent No.
6,051,976, issued April 18, 2000, entitled METHOD AND
5 APPARATUS FOR AUDITING A BATTERY TEST; U.S. Patent No.
6,081,098, issued June 27, 2000, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR CHARGING A BATTERY; U.S. Patent No.
6,091,245, issued July 18, 2000, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR AUDITING A BATTERY TEST; U.S. Patent No.
10 6,104,167, issued August 15, 2000, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR CHARGING A BATTERY; U.S. Patent No.
6,137,269, issued October 24, 2000, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR ELECTRONICALLY EVALUATING THE INTERNAL
TEMPERATURE OF AN ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL OR BATTERY; U.S.
15 Patent No. 6,163,156, issued December 19, 2000,
entitled ELECTRICAL CONNECTION FOR ELECTRONIC BATTERY
TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,172,483, issued January 9,
2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MEASURING
COMPLEX IMPEDANCE OF CELL AND BATTERIES; U.S. Patent
20 No. 6,172,505, issued January 9, 2001, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,222,369,
issued April 24, 2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR DETERMINING BATTERY PROPERTIES FROM COMPLEX
IMPEDANCE/ADMITTANCE; U.S. Patent No. 6,225,808, issued
25 May 1, 2001, entitled TEST COUNTER FOR ELECTRONIC
BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,249,124, issued June
19, 2001, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH
INTERNAL BATTERY; U.S. Patent No. 6,259,254, issued
July 10, 2001, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR

CARRYING OUT DIAGNOSTIC TESTS ON BATTERIES AND FOR
RAPIDLY CHARGING BATTERIES; U.S. Patent No. 6,262,563,
issued July 17, 2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
MEASURING COMPLEX ADMITTANCE OF CELLS AND BATTERIES;
5 U.S. Patent No. 6,294,896, issued September 25, 2001;
entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MEASURING COMPLEX
SELF-IMMITANCE OF A GENERAL ELECTRICAL ELEMENT; U.S.
Patent No. 6,294,897, issued September 25, 2001,
entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ELECTRONICALLY
10 EVALUATING THE INTERNAL TEMPERATURE OF AN
ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL OR BATTERY; U.S. Patent No.
6,304,087, issued October 16, 2001, entitled APPARATUS
FOR CALIBRATING ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent
No. 6,310,481, issued October 30, 2001, entitled
15 ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,313,607,
issued November 6, 2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR EVALUATING STORED CHARGE IN AN ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL
OR BATTERY; U.S. Patent No. 6,313,608, issued November
6, 2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CHARGING A
20 BATTERY; U.S. Patent No. 6,316,914, issued November 13,
2001, entitled TESTING PARALLEL STRINGS OF STORAGE
BATTERIES; U.S. Patent No. 6,323,650, issued November
27, 2001, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S.
Patent No. 6,329,793, issued December 11, 2001,
25 entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CHARGING A BATTERY;
U.S. Patent No. 6,331,762, issued December 18, 2001,
entitled ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR AUTOMOTIVE
VEHICLE; U.S. Patent No. 6,332,113, issued December 18,
2001, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent

No. 6,351,102, issued February 26, 2002, entitled
AUTOMOTIVE BATTERY CHARGING SYSTEM TESTER; U.S. Patent
No. 6,359,441, issued March 19, 2002, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,363,303,
5 issued March 26, 2002, entitled ALTERNATOR DIAGNOSTIC
SYSTEM, U.S. Patent No. 6,392,414, issued May 21, 2002,
entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No.
6,417,669, issued July 9, 2002, entitled SUPPRESSING
INTERFERENCE IN AC MEASUREMENTS OF CELLS, BATTERIES AND
10 OTHER ELECTRICAL ELEMENTS; U.S. Patent No. 6,424,158,
issued July 23, 2002, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
CARRYING OUT DIAGNOSTIC TESTS ON BATTERIES AND FOR
RAPIDLY CHARGING BATTERIES; U.S. Patent No. 6,441,585,
issued August 17, 2002, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD
15 FOR TESTING RECHARGEABLE ENERGY STORAGE BATTERIES; U.S.
Patent No. 6,445,158, issued September 3, 2002,
entitled VEHICLE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM TESTER WITH ENCODED
OUTPUT; U.S. Patent No. 6,456,045, issued September 24,
2002, entitled INTEGRATED CONDUCTANCE AND LOAD TEST
20 BASED ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No.
6,466,025, issued October 15, 2002, entitled ALTERNATOR
TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,466,026, issued October 15,
2002, entitled PROGRAMMABLE CURRENT EXCITER FOR
MEASURING AC IMMITTANCE OF CELLS AND BATTERIES; U.S.
25 Patent No. 6,534,993, issued March 18, 2003, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,544,078,
issued April 8, 2003, entitled BATTERY CLAMP WITH
INTEGRATED CURRENT SENSOR; U.S. Patent No. 6,556,019,
issued April 29, 2003, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY

TESTER; U.S. Patent No. 6,566,883, issued May 20, 2003,
entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Patent No.
6,586,941, issued July 1, 2003, entitled BATTERY TESTER
WITH DATABUS; U.S. Patent No. 6,597,150, issued July
5 22, 2003, entitled METHOD OF DISTRIBUTING JUMP-START
BOOSTER PACKS; U.S. Patent No. 6,621,272, issued
September 16, 2003, entitled PROGRAMMABLE CURRENT
EXCITER FOR MEASURING AC IMMITTANCE OF CELLS AND
BATTERIES, U.S. Patent No. 6,623,314, issued September
10 23, 2003, entitled KELVIN CLAMP FOR ELECTRICALLY
COUPLING TO A BATTERY CONTACT, U.S. Patent No.
6,633,165, issued October 14, 2003, entitled IN-VEHICLE
BATTERY MONITOR, U.S. Patent No. 6,635,974, issued
October 21, 2003, entitled SELF-LEARNING POWER
15 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD, U.S. Serial No.
09/780,146, filed February 9, 2001, entitled STORAGE
BATTERY WITH INTEGRAL BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Serial No.
09/756,638, filed January 8, 2001, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR DETERMINING BATTERY PROPERTIES FROM
20 COMPLEX IMPEDANCE/ADMITTANCE; U.S. Serial No.
09/862,783, filed May 21, 2001, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR TESTING CELLS AND BATTERIES EMBEDDED IN
SERIES/PARALLEL SYSTEMS; U.S. Serial No. 09/908,278,
filed July 18, 2001, entitled BATTERY CLAMP WITH
25 EMBEDDED ENVIRONMENT SENSOR; U.S. Serial No.
09/880,473, filed June 13, 2001; entitled BATTERY TEST
MODULE; U.S. Serial No. 09/940,684, filed August 27,
2001, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR EVALUATING
STORED CHARGE IN AN ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL OR BATTERY;

U.S. Serial No. 60/330,441, filed October 17, 2001,
entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH RELATIVE TEST
OUTPUT; U.S. Serial No. 60/348,479, filed October 29,
2001, entitled CONCEPT FOR TESTING HIGH POWER VRLA
5 BATTERIES; U.S. Serial No. 10/046,659, filed October
29, 2001, entitled ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR
AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE; U.S. Serial No. 09/993,468, filed
November 14, 2001, entitled KELVIN CONNECTOR FOR A
BATTERY POST; U.S. Serial No. 09/992,350, filed
10 November 26, 2001, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER,
U.S. Serial No. 60/341,902, filed December 19, 2001,
entitled BATTERY TESTER MODULE; U.S. Serial No.
10/042,451, filed January 8, 2002, entitled BATTERY
CHARGE CONTROL DEVICE, U.S. Serial No. 10/073,378,
15 filed February 8, 2002, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS
USING A CIRCUIT MODEL TO EVALUATE CELL/BATTERY
PARAMETERS; U.S. Serial No. 10/093,853, filed March 7,
2002, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH NETWORK
COMMUNICATION; U.S. Serial No. 60/364,656, filed March
20 14, 2002, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH LOW
TEMPERATURE RATING DETERMINATION; U.S. Serial No.
10/098,741, filed March 14, 2002, entitled METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR AUDITING A BATTERY TEST; U.S. Serial No.
10/112,114, filed March 28, 2002; U.S. Serial No.
25 10/109,734, filed March 28, 2002; U.S. Serial No.
10/112,105, filed March 28, 2002, entitled CHARGE
CONTROL SYSTEM FOR A VEHICLE BATTERY; U.S. Serial No.
10/112,998, filed March 29, 2002, entitled BATTERY
TESTER WITH BATTERY REPLACEMENT OUTPUT; U.S. Serial No.

10/119,297, filed April 9, 2002, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TESTING CELLS AND BATTERIES EMBEDDED IN SERIES/PARALLEL SYSTEMS; U.S. Serial No. 60/379,281, filed May 8, 2002, entitled METHOD FOR DETERMINING
5 BATTERY STATE OF CHARGE; U.S. Serial No. 60/387,046, filed June 7, 2002, entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR INCREASING THE LIFE OF A STORAGE BATTERY; U.S. Serial No. 10/177,635, filed June 21, 2002, entitled BATTERY CHARGER WITH BOOSTER PACK; U.S. Serial No. 10/200,041,
10 filed July 19, 2002, entitled AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM DIAGNOSTIC DEVICE; U.S. Serial No. 10/217,913, filed August 13, 2002, entitled, BATTERY TEST MODULE; U.S. Serial No. 60/408,542, filed September 5, 2002, entitled BATTERY TEST OUTPUTS
15 ADJUSTED BASED UPON TEMPERATURE; U.S. Serial No. 10/246,439, filed September 18, 2002, entitled BATTERY TESTER UPGRADE USING SOFTWARE KEY; U.S. Serial No. 60/415,399, filed October 2, 2002, entitled QUERY BASED ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; and U.S. Serial No.
20 10/263,473, filed October 2, 2002, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH RELATIVE TEST OUTPUT; U.S. Serial No. 60/415,796, filed October 3, 2002, entitled QUERY BASED ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Serial No. 10/271,342, filed October 15, 2002, entitled IN-VEHICLE
25 BATTERY MONITOR; U.S. Serial No. 10/310,515, filed December 5, 2002, entitled BATTERY TEST MODULE; U.S. Serial No. 10/310,490, filed December 5, 2002, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER; U.S. Serial No. 10/310,385, filed December 5, 2002, entitled BATTERY TEST MODULE,

U.S. Serial No. 60/437,255, filed December 31, 2002,
entitled REMAINING TIME PREDICTIONS, U.S. Serial No.
60/437,224, filed December 31, 2002, entitled DISCHARGE
VOLTAGE PREDICTIONS, U.S. Serial No. 10/349,053, filed
5 January 22, 2003, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
PROTECTING A BATTERY FROM OVERDISCHARGE, U.S. Serial
No. 10/388,855, filed March 14, 2003, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER WITH BATTERY FAILURE
TEMPERATURE DETERMINATION, U.S. Serial No. 10/396,550,
10 filed March 25, 2003, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY
TESTER, U.S. Serial No. 60/467,872, filed May 5, 2003,
entitled METHOD FOR DETERMINING BATTERY STATE OF
CHARGE, U.S. Serial No. 60/477,082, filed June 9,
2003, entitled ALTERNATOR TESTER, U.S. Serial No.
15 10/460,749, filed June 12, 2003, entitled MODULAR
BATTERY TESTER FOR SCAN TOOL, U.S. Serial No.
10/462,323, filed June 16, 2003, entitled ELECTRONIC
BATTERY TESTER HAVING A USER INTERFACE TO CONFIGURE A
PRINTER, U.S. Serial No. 10/601,608, filed June 23,
20 2003, entitled CABLE FOR ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER,
U.S. Serial No. 10/601,432, filed June 23, 2003,
entitled BATTERY TESTER CABLE WITH MEMORY; U.S. Serial
No. 60/490,153, filed July 25, 2003, entitled SHUNT
CONNECTION TO A PCB FOR AN ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
25 EMPLOYED IN AN AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE, U.S. Serial No.
10/653,342, filed September 2, 2003, entitled
ELECTRONIC BATTERY TESTER CONFIGURED TO PREDICT A LOAD
TEST RESULT, U.S. Serial No. 10/654,098, filed
September 3, 2003, entitled BATTERY TEST OUTPUTS

ADJUSTED BASED UPON BATTERY TEMPERATURE AND THE STATE
OF DISCHARGE OF THE BATTERY, U.S. Serial No.
10/656,526, filed September 5, 2003, entitled METHOD
AND APPARATUS FOR MEASURING A PARAMETER OF A VEHICLE
5 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM, U.S. Serial No. 10/656,538, filed
September 5, 2003, entitled ALTERNATOR TESTER WITH
ENCODED OUTPUT, U.S. Serial No. 10/675,933, filed
September 30, 2003, entitled QUERY BASED ELECTRONIC
BATTERY TESTER, U.S. Serial No. 10/678,629, filed
10 October 3, 2003, entitled ELECTRONIC BATTERY
TESTER/CHARGER WITH INTEGRATED BATTERY CELL
TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENT DEVICE, U.S. Serial No.
10/681,666, filed October 8, 2003, entitled ELECTRONIC
BATTERY TESTER WITH PROBE LIGHT.

15 In the specific embodiment illustrated in
FIG. 1, the forcing function is a function which
applies a signal having an AC or transient component to
battery 18. The forcing function can be through the
application of a load which provides a desired forcing
20 function in which current is drawn from battery 18, or
can be through active circuitry in which a current is
injected into battery 18. This results in a current
labeled I_F in FIG. 1. The total current, I_T through
battery 18 is due to both the forcing function current
25 I_F and the current flowing through loads 14, I_L .
Current sensor 26 is positioned to sense the total
current I_T . One example battery dynamic parameter, the
dynamic conductance (or reciprocally the battery
resistance) can be calculated as:

$$G = \Delta I_T / \Delta V$$

Equation 1

where ΔV is the change in voltage measured across the battery 18 by voltage sensor 24 and ΔI_T is the change
5 in total current measured flowing through battery 18 using current sensor 26. The forcing function 28 is provided in order to ensure that the current through battery 18 changes with time. However, in one embodiment, changes in I_L due to loads 14 or the output
10 from alternator 20 can be used alone such that $\Delta I_T = \Delta I_L$ and the forcing function 28 is not required.

As mentioned above, temperature sensor 37 is provided which can be coupled directly to one of the terminals, or exterior surface, of the battery 18 for
15 measuring battery temperature. The temperature sensor 37 can be used in determining the condition of the battery, as battery condition is a function of temperature and can be used in estimating the amount of power which will be required to start the engine of the
20 vehicle. Any type of temperature sensor can be used, for example, a thermistor, thermocouple, RTD, semiconductor or other temperature sensor.

In one embodiment, current sensor 26 comprises a resistance shunt of 250 micro ohms and
25 current through the shunt is determined by measuring the voltage drop across the shunt. However, other types of current measurement techniques can also be used such as Hall Effect sensors or through an inductance probe.

As mentioned above, microprocessor 22 utilizes the measured battery conductance along with the full charge conductance adjusted to the same temperature standard as the measured battery conductance, the estimated capacity of the battery, etc., to determine the remaining run time of the battery. One example equation, which can be implemented in microprocessor 22, to determine the remaining run time of the battery is as follows:

10 $TR = k * (Ah / I^n) * (V - 10.5)^2 * G / G_0$

Equation 2A

Where G is the measured battery conductance (using Equation 1, for example)

15 G₀ is the conductance at full charge and at measured or present battery temperature

Ah is estimated ampere hours at the present time

I is the discharge current

20 n is Peukert's constant, which typically has a value between 1 and 1.5

V is the battery voltage

k is a proportionality constant

25 TR is the time remaining until the 12V battery is depleted.

It should be noted that when an initial measurement of TR is carried out, Ah and G₀ (of Equation 2A) are unknown. When these capacity and conductance values

are unknown, rated capacity and conductance (Ah_{Rated} and G_{Rated}) can be used to calculate TR as shown below:

$$TR = k * (Ah_{Rated} / I^n) * (V - 10.5)^2 * G / G_{Rated}$$

Equation 2B

5 It should also be noted that the 10.5 volt value included in Equations 2A and 2B is a minimum terminal voltage value for a typical automobile battery. However, other minimum terminal voltage values may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of
10 the invention.

FIG. 2 is a flowchart 100 showing steps of a method of determining a remaining run time of a discharging battery in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. At step 102, a dynamic
15 parameter of the battery is measured. At step 104, a discharge current of the battery is obtained. At step 106, a voltage of the battery is measured. At step 108, a temperature of the battery is obtained. At step 110, the remaining run time of the battery is
20 predicted as a function of the measured battery dynamic parameter, the discharge current, the measured battery voltage, the battery temperature, the full charge battery dynamic parameter adjusted to the same temperature standard as the measured battery
25 dynamic parameter, and an estimated capacity of the battery.

FIGS. 3-1 to 3-9 are flowcharts illustrating the implementation of a specific embodiment of the present invention. This embodiment

demonstrates how the remaining run time of the battery is predicted under a variety of conditions. This embodiment also demonstrates how battery capacity can be learned as the iterative battery
5 monitoring/testing process is carried out.

The flowchart of FIG. 3-1 shows a battery monitor startup or initialization procedure, which begins at step 300. At step 302, different functions are defined and different program variables, which
10 are utilized for intermediate storage of data during program execution, are initialized. For example, a function used to obtain a temperature-based compensation factor for conductance, $FNCOMP_G = f_1(TEMP)$, and a function used to obtain a
15 temperature-based compensation factor for battery capacity, $FNCOMP_{CAP} = f_2(TEMP)$, are defined at step 302. At step 304, the battery ampere hour (Ah) capacity (CAP_0), typical battery conductance (G_0) and typical battery current for discharge (A_{ave}) are
20 input. Control then passes, via step 306, to data input step 308 of a main iterative procedure shown in FIG. 3-2.

As can be seen in FIG. 3-2, at step 310, input data such as present time (T), battery current
25 (A), battery voltage (V), battery temperature ($TEMP$) and battery conductance (G) are obtained. It should be noted that quantities A , V , $TEMP$ and G are measured periodically (every 12.8 seconds, for example). At step 312, compensated battery

conductance (Gcomp) is computed ($G_{comp} = G * FNCOMP(G(TEMP))$). Further, the input value of current A is saved in field A1 ($A1 = A$). Also, fields that store initial start time (TSTART) and first access
5 time (T1) are updated if necessary (IF TSTART = 0 THEN TSTART = T; IF T1 = 0 THEN T1 = T). At step 314, a determination is made as to whether the battery monitor is hooked up (i.e., whether an initial amount of battery discharge is ascertained) by examining the
10 contents of a hookup indicator field or flag (HOOKUP). For example, if the hook flag is not set (HOOKUP = 0), then control passes, via step 316, to the hookup procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-3. If the hookup flag
15 is set, then control passes, via step 318, to the calculation procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-4. As can be seen in FIG. 3-2, control also passes to the calculation procedure when the hookup procedure is completed.
20 After completion of the calculations procedure, at step 320, a determination is made as to whether A is less than a negative value of constant K1 ($K1 = 0.2$ amperes, for example) and whether V is less than constant K2 ($K2 = 13.5$ volts, for example). If A is
25 less than the negative value of K1 and V is less than K2, control passes, via step 322, to a discharge mode procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-6. If the condition in step 320 is not satisfied, control passes to step 324. At

step 324, a determination is made as to whether A is greater than K1 or whether V is greater than or equal to K2. If A is greater than K1 or V is greater than or equal to K2, control passes, via step 326, to a charge mode procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-8. If the condition in step 324 is not satisfied, control passes, via step 328, to an idle mode procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-5.

10 After completion of the charge mode procedure, discharge mode procedure or idle mode procedure control passes to a display procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-9, via step 330. After completion of the display

15 procedure, control passes back to data input 308.

FIG. 3-3 shows a flowchart of the hookup procedure, which begins at step 332. At step 334, an estimation of the amount of discharge from the battery voltage and the discharge versus voltage characteristics is carried out. At step 336, the

20 hookup indicator field (HOOKUP) is set to a predetermined value (for example, HOOKUP = -1) to indicate that the battery monitor is hooked up. Control then returns, via step 338, to the main

25 iterative procedure illustrated in FIG. 3-2.

FIG. 3-4 shows a flowchart of the calculation procedure, which begins at step 340. At step 342, an accumulated discharge (D) in Ah is computed using the following relationship:

$$D = D + A * (T - T1)/3600$$

Equation 3

It should be noted that discharge D should be negative and therefore if D is greater than zero, then D is set equal to zero (IF D > 0 THEN D=0). At step 344, a determination is made as to whether a state of charge (SOC) of the battery, which is expressed as a percentage, is greater than a constant K3 (K3 = 90%, for example). If SOC is greater than K3, nominal compensated conductance is calculated, at step 346, using a weighted averaging relationship:

$$G0 = (K4 * G0 + Gcomp) / (K4 + 1)$$

Equation 4

where K4 is a constant that is equal to 999 when measurements (battery voltage, current etc.) are carried out every 12.8 seconds, for example. It should be noted that, in general, the value of K4 is dependent upon the frequency at which measurements are carried out. If SOC is less than or equal to K3, control passes to step 348. Also, after nominal compensated conductance is determined at step 346, control passes to step 348. At step 348, a determination is made as to whether the battery is discharging. If the battery is not discharging, at step 350, an estimation of the working capacity (CAP) of the battery at average current and present temperature is carried out using the following relationship:

$$CAP = CAP0 * FNCOMPCAP(TEMP) / (Aave)^{n-1}$$

Equation 5

where n is Peukert's constant for a particular battery and typically has a value between 1 and 1.5 depending on the type of battery. At step 352, a remaining run time (TR) of the battery at overall average current and temperature is determined using the following relationship:

$$TR = (CAP + D) / A_{ave}$$

Equation 6

TR cannot be negative and therefore if TR is less than zero, then TR is set equal to zero. At step 354, SOC is estimated based on working capacity and accumulated discharge using the following relationship:

$$SOC = (CAP + D) / CAP * 100$$

Equation 7

Since SOC is expressed as a percentage, it has to be between zero and one hundred. Therefore, if SOC is greater than 100, then SOC is set equal to 100. Similarly, if SOC is less than 0, then SOC is set equal to 0. After the computation of SOC at step 354, control passes to step 356. Also, if, at step 348, a determination is made that the battery is discharging, then control passes to step 356. At step 356, an old time value is saved by setting T1 equal to T. Control then returns, via step 358, to the main iterative procedure illustrated in FIG. 3-2.

FIG. 3-5 shows a flowchart of an idle mode procedure, which begins at step 360. At step 362, a

determination is made as to whether an idle mode is set by examining the contents of an idle mode indicator field (IDLE). For example, if IDLE = 0 (i.e., the idle mode is not set), then control passes
5 to step 364, where the idle mode is set (for example, IDLE = -1). Also, the charge and discharge indicator fields are appropriately set to indicate that the battery is not charging or discharging. Further, the initial time T0 is set equal to T at step 364. After
10 completion of step 364, control passes to step 366. Also, if IDLE is not equal to 0 at step 362, then control passes to step 366. At step 366, control is passed to the display procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-9.

15 FIG. 3-6 shows a flowchart of a discharge mode procedure, which begins at step 368. At step 370, a determination is made as to whether a discharge mode is set by examining the contents of a discharge mode indicator field (DISCHARGE). For
20 example, if DISCHARGE = 0 (i.e., the discharge mode is not set), then control passes to step 372 where the discharge mode is set (for example, DISCHARGE = -1). Also, the charge and idle indicator fields are appropriately set to indicate that the battery is not
25 charging or idle. Further, at step 372, the initial discharge value D0 is set equal to D; the initial time T0 is set equal to T; field CAP1 is set equal to CAP0; field SOC1 is set equal to SOC to hold the last value of SOC, and counter (N) is set equal to 1. If

DISCHARGE is not equal to 0, then control passes to step 374 where a determination is made as to whether the counter N is not equal to 0. If the condition in step 374 is satisfied, then, at step 376, N is incremented by one ($N = N + 1$). Further, at step 376, if N is equal to 3, for example, then N is set equal to 0. This step is carried out to eliminate transition values and instantaneous spikes in the discharge, again dependent upon the frequency of data collection. If the condition in step 374 is not satisfied, then control passes to step 378 at which a determination is made as to whether a negative or absolute value of the discharge current ($-A$) is greater than CAP0 divided by 20. If the condition at step 378 is satisfied, then low values of current are not averaged at step 380. The following weighted averaging relationship is used to determine average discharge current:

$$A_{ave} = (K5 * A_{ave} - A) / (K5 + 1)$$

Equation 8
where K5 is a constant that is equal to 99 when measurements are carried out every 12.8 seconds, for example. It should be noted that, in general, the value of K5 is dependent upon the frequency at which measurements are carried out. Further, at step 380, an estimation of the working capacity at measured temperature and current is carried out using the following relationship:

$$CAP = CAP1 * FNCOMPCAP(TEMP) / (-A)^{n-1}$$

Equation 9

If the condition at step 378 is not satisfied, or after the completion of step 380, step 382 is carried out. At step 382, a determination is made as to
5 whether V is greater than or equal to the minimum terminal voltage value for a typical automobile battery (10.5 volts, for example) and whether a negative value of current (-A) is greater than CAP0 divided by 20 (whether a significant amount of
10 current is being discharged). If the condition at step 382 is satisfied, control passes to step 384 which, in turn, directs control to a discharge calculation procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-7. If the condition
15 at step 382 is not satisfied, or after the completion of the discharge calculations, step 386 is carried out. At step 386, using the above Equation 7, SOC is recalculated using discharge values. At step 388, a determination is made as to whether V is less than
20 10.5 volts. If this condition is satisfied, then TR, TRCALC (time remaining calculated using battery parameters), and SOC are set equal to 0 and CAP1 is set equal to CAP0. If the condition in step 388 is not satisfied, control passes to step 392. Also,
25 completion of any one of steps 372, 376 and 390 results in control being passed to step 392. At step 392, control is passed to the display procedure, which is described further below in connection with FIG. 3-9.

FIG. 3-7 shows a flowchart of a discharge calculation procedure, which begins at step 394. At step 396, the time remaining is calculated using battery parameters with the help of the following relationship:

$$TRCALC = K6 * CAP1 / (-A)^n * Gcomp / G0 * (V - 10.5)^2$$

Equation 10

where K6 is a constant. At step 398, a determination is made as to whether SOC1 is equal to 0. If SOC1 is equal to zero, then SOC1 is set equal to 1 at step 400. If SOC is not equal to zero at step 398, or after the completion of step 400, control passes to step 402. At step 402, field F1 is set equal to SOC divided by SOC1. If F1 is greater than 1, then F1 is set equal to 1. Field F2 is set equal to 1 minus F1. At step 404, a determination is made as to whether CAP plus D is less than 0 and whether TRCALC is greater than 0. If this condition is satisfied, CAP is set equal to a negative value of a product of TRCALC and A plus D at step 406. Further CAP1 is set equal to CAP0, which gets recalculated after each iteration. If the condition at step 404 is not satisfied, or after the completion of step 406, control passes to step 408. At step 408, the time remaining is estimated based on previously estimated capacity and new calculations and SOC weighting using the following relationship:

$$TR = -F1 * (CAP + D) / A + F2 * TRCALC$$

Equation 11

At step 410, a determination is made as to whether TRCALC is equal to 0 or whether TR is less than 0. If this condition is satisfied, TR is set equal to zero at step 412. If the condition at step 410 is not
 5 satisfied, or after the completion of step 412, control passes to step 414. At step 414, working capacity is estimated at present current using the following relation:

$$CAP = -(TR * A + D)$$

10

Equation 12

Also, at step 414, overall capacity is recalculated using the following relation:

$$CAP0 = (-D * (Aave)^{n-1} + (CAP + D) * ((-A)^{n-1})) / \\ FNCOMPCAP(TEMP)$$

15

Equation 13

Control then returns, via step 416, to the discharge mode procedure illustrated in FIG. 3-6.

FIG. 3-8 shows a flowchart of a charge mode procedure, which begins at step 418. At step 420, a
 20 determination is made as to whether a charge mode is set by examining the contents of a charge mode indicator field (CHARGE). For example, if CHARGE = 0 (i.e., the charge mode is not set), then control passes to step 422, where the charge mode is set (for
 25 example, CHARGE = -1). Also, the discharge and idle indicator fields are appropriately set to indicate that the battery is not discharging or idle. Further, the initial time T0 is set equal to T at step 422. After completion of step 422, control passes to step

424. Also, if CHARGE is not equal to 0 at step 420, then control passes to step 424. At step 424, control is passed to the display procedure, which is described below in connection with FIG. 3-9.

5 FIG. 3-9 shows a flowchart of a display procedure, which begins at step 426. At step 428, a determination is made as to whether the battery is discharging. If the battery is found to be discharging, a message "DISCHARGING" is displayed at
10 step 430. If the battery is not found to be discharging at step 428, a determination is made as to whether the battery is charging at step 432. If the battery is found to be charging, a message "CHARGING" is displayed at step 434. If the battery
15 is not found to be charging at step 432, a message "IDLE" is displayed at step 436. After completion of any of steps 430, 434 and 436, control passes to step 438. At step 438, system voltage, current, temperature in degrees Fahrenheit, discharge in Ah
20 and SOC expressed as a percentage are displayed. At step 440, a determination is made as to whether discharge and N are equal to 0 and whether a negative value of current (-A) is greater than CAP0 divided by 20. This condition is a test as to whether a
25 significant amount of current is being discharged and that the discharge is persistent. If this condition is satisfied, the time remaining at real current is displayed at step 442. If the condition of step 440 is not satisfied, the time remaining at average

current is displayed at step 444. Control from steps 442 and 444 passes to step 446. Control then returns, via step 446, to the data input step 308 of the main iterative procedure illustrated in FIG. 3-2.

5 Instructions for carrying out the above procedure (FIGS. 3-1 to 3-9) are stored in a memory (not shown), which may be a part of microprocessor 22, which executes these instructions. Different techniques, some of which are set forth above, can be
10 employed to carry out the steps shown in the above flowcharts while maintaining substantially the same functionality without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

 Although the present invention has been
15 described with reference to preferred embodiments, workers skilled in the art will recognize that changes may be made in form and detail without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. In addition, although embodiments of the present
20 invention, described above, relate to an in-vehicle battery monitor capable of determining the remaining run time of a discharging battery, it should be noted that the remaining run time determination technique of the present invention can also be implemented in a
25 hand-held device, for example, that is not installed in the vehicle. Such a device (battery tester 400 shown in FIG. 4) includes Kelvin probes (36A and 36B) for temporary electrical coupling to the vehicle battery. In general, the components of such a device

are similar to that of battery monitor 12 (FIG. 1) described above. In the embodiment of FIG. 4, current sensor 26 can be a Hall-effect current sensor that senses current when positioned within a magnetic field produced by an electrical conductor (not shown) that is coupled to a terminal (not shown) of battery 18.

It should be noted that, in general, battery temperature influences different battery measurements and battery test results. Thus, in a number of the above Equations, temperature compensated battery conductance values are used to determine the remaining run time of the battery and for other intermediate calculations. Specifically, at least one of the measured battery dynamic parameter and the full charge battery dynamic parameter are adjusted such that the measured battery dynamic parameter and the full charge battery dynamic parameter are at the same temperature standard. However, workers skilled in the art will recognize that temperature compensation may be inherent when certain measurements are carried out. For example, it has been observed that, at different temperatures, battery voltage measurements tend to compensate for battery conductance measurements obtained. Therefore, in some embodiments of the present invention, non-compensated conductance (G) can be employed instead of compensated conductance (G_{comp}) in Equation 10, for example. In such embodiments, G_0 is the full

charge battery conductance at a fixed temperature (25 degrees Celsius, for example) at which battery capacity is normally determined.